



human settlements

MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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R70 MILLION SET TO EMPOWER THE YOUTH

Young people in Mpumalanga are set to benefit from a **R70 million** budget set for skills development through the Youth Brigade Programme. The programme which was launched by MEC, Violet Siwela at Mgobodi Nkomazi Local Municipality yesterday (26 August 2015) has enrolled 200 youth participants on theory and practical skills to ultimately introduce them into the main stream economy. The Human Settlements Department is delivering the programme in partnership with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the National Home Builder's Registration Council (NHBC).

Four municipalities of Dr J.S Moroka, Chief Albert Luthuli, Nkomazi and Bushbuckridge have contributed 50 learners each towards this initiative. The programme seeks to skill young people and links them to access opportunities in the built environment at a large scale through annual intakes. One of the participants, 30-year old Ms Hlelisile Nkosi, heaved a sigh at the launch of the programme. **"It is very frustrating to be unemployed and you have a family to feed and this programme couldn't have come at a right time for us unemployed youth. It will not only assist us financially, but we are going to be empowered with construction skills so that after the programme we can be able work on our own"** said Ms Nkosi.

According to recent statistics, Mpumalanga has about 28% unemployment rate mainly affecting the youth. The report further states that about 38% of the youth is unemployed. This figure is higher than the average provincial unemployment rate. The vision of the Youth Brigade is to create a capable, strong and flexible category of well-trained Human Settlements volunteers who support government to accelerate housing delivery. As the roll-out of the programme continues further recruitments will be made to ensure that it gains momentum to have significant footprints throughout the Province.

By this we really need dedicated youth who want to improve their welfare however, notwithstanding better opportunities that may avail themselves to the youth said MEC Siwela. In conclusion Siwela said **"Our intervention should be a dedicated focus on partnerships between government and business and delivery projects which are less dependent on energy such as alternative building technology and manufacturing amongst others"**. The Department will ensure that the youth skills developed through the programme are nurtured to the latter. The acquired skills will enable the youth to either pursue their trade in existing construction companies or establish their own. The programme will be extended to other municipalities in the ensuing financial years.

**ISSUED BY THE COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTORATE
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